



## Amos

Amos is sometimes referred to as “The poor man’s prophet.” God called this farmer from the southern kingdom of Judah into the northern nation of Israel to deliver what becomes a message so forceful and scathing that even today civil right advocates still quote this prophet. Amos blasts the people responsible for the terrible social inequality and injustice which had enveloped northern Israel, and for having abandoned any serious attempt to keep the law, and for being entrenched in idolatry.

Jewish leaders and people of influence in northern Israel believed God was smiling on them. After all, they were enjoying peace and lavish prosperity for quite some time and considered this to be evidence of the blessings from above. However, this prosperity had nothing to do with God’s blessing. Instead, Amos says, it has everything to do with the rich people exploiting the poor, cheating their customers, and bribing officials. Amos warns this corruption will stop; either the people repent, or God will bring judgement. Not surprising, the leaders of the northern kingdom got tired of Amos’ message and soon told him to take his message back to where he came from, Judah.

The theme of social justice and righteousness runs throughout the book of Amos. God states that He takes no pleasure in people’s hypocritical worship or meaningless religious rituals. What God wants is true worship which must connect with empathy and compassion for others and to help alleviate suffering.

The book of Amos is unrelenting in its challenge to us for the concern for the poor and for those who suffer. God is indignant and impatient with those who enjoy lavish lifestyles while the poor suffer. He expects His people to have compassion and help the less fortunate.

How are we treating the people around us? In God’s eyes, that is an indicator of our heart, our spiritual condition.